CALFED BAY-DELTA PROGRAM

DESIGNING A COMPREHENSIVE BAY-DELTA SOLUTION

UPDATE -- April 1997

Phase II, Program Schedule, The January Floods, Common Programs, Storage and Conveyance

Phase II Continues . . .

Phase I of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program was a problem identification process that included significant public participation through both technical workshops and general public meetings. Of course, there were also regular Bay-Delta Advisory Council meetings as well, which provided another avenue for public comment.

Phase II has been a more internally focused effort. More detailed (but still programmatic level) analyses of the 3 alternative solutions, incorporating the public's input from Phase I, will be carried out through the late spring. This will include critical analysis of how the various components will work as an integrated whole.

Documents to satisfy both National Environmental Policy Act and California Environmental Quality Act requirements are also under development at this time.

THE CALFED BAY-DELTA PROGRAM

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is an historic, consensus-based environmental planning effort bringing together interested Californians and the state and federal governments to resolve environmental and water management problems associated with the Bay-Delta system.

The Bay-Delta is both a tremendous ecological resource (home to more than 120 fish and wildlife species) and California's primary water hub with more than 22 million people and over 4 million acres of the world's most productive farmland all dependent upon reliable and sufficient water supplies from the Delta.

The CALFED program is staffed by a consortium of technical experts assigned from multiple state and federal agencies.

Program Schedule

Phase II entails development of a Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (DEIR/EIS). Work also continues on assurances, e.g. assuring today's commitments are honored tomorrow with adequate financing. Bay-Delta Advisory Council sub-committees are tackling these difficult issues.

The DEIR/EIS is slated to be available for public review this fall. Formal public hearings will begin in early 1998 and continue for a period significantly in excess of the mandated 45-day minimum time; likely 3-4 months. The first half of 1998 will be spent reviewing public comment and refining the document. Final selection of a preferred alternative will occur in September of 1998.

The January Floods

The tragic flooding that struck the Central Valley in January of this year has intensified interest in providing additional flood management protections for California.

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program has incorporated actions into its component analysis which are expected to partially address this pressing need. These include investigations of expanding flood bypass areas, the increased use of set-back levees, and partial restoration of natural river meanders. Such actions have the added impact of being environmentally beneficial and serving to increase important habitat types as well as improving flood management flexibility.

Improved reservoir management capabilities are also being studied, including methods of transferring water from on-stream flood control reservoirs to off-stream water conservation reservoirs to maintain prudent flood space reservations without losing precious water supplies.

F-000581

The mission of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program is to develop a long-term comprehensive plan that will restore ecological health and improve water management for beneficial uses of the Bay-Delta System.

Common Programs

All of the alternatives being studied by the CALFED Bay-Delta Program include four "common programs": ecosystem restoration, water quality, water use efficiency, and levee system integrity. The variable distinguishing each of the alternatives is the storage and conveyance component.

Ecosystem Restoration

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program, working closely with CALFED agencies, outside experts and the public, has produced a *draft* Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan (ERPP) which will be the subject of significant public scrutiny over the next few months. Organized by bioregion (e.g. the Delta, Colusa Basin, East San Joaquin Basin, etc.), the ERPP analyses problems, present impacts, and possible actions that could be taken to improve and increase habitats as well as enhance ecological functions.

The ERPP also includes preliminary goals and objectives to ultimately define success, as well as specific target criteria developed in conjunction with agency and stakeholder technical staff. Policy input and guidance has been provided by the BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group.

The ERPP provides an initial program plan for discussion, review and refinement, and introduces related long-term implementation issues: e.g. time frames; progress and success criteria; research and monitoring needs; etc. Adaptive management to optimize efficiencies and effectiveness will rely upon and reflect these aspects of the proposed program plan.

[Program Contact: Dick Daniel]

Levee System Integrity

A Levee and Channel Technical Team, including agency and other experts, as well as members of the public, has been meeting regularly to develop a long-term plan for stabilizing and maintaining Delta levees and for managing levee emergencies.

CALFED Solution Principles

The Preferred Alternative should:

- Reduce Conflicts
- Be Equitable
- Be Affordable
- Be Durable
- Have No Significant Redirected Impacts
- Be Implementable

The issues being addressed include how to provide habitat on levees while preserving stability, the use and benefits of waterside berms, land subsidence on Delta islands, seismic susceptibility, use of dredge materials for maintenance, and the possible establishment of in-channel islands for habitat and as wave/wake breaks to protect levees.

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The January floods focused attention on our levee program. Instead of diverting attention away from the Program's Delta-oriented mission, there has been interest in developing projects which provide dual benefits for increased flood protection in the Valley while simultaneously providing ecosystem improvements.

Conveyance Options

[1] Existing Through Delta

[2] Modified Through Delta

[3] Dual System: Modified Through Delta & Isolated Conveyance Capability

[Program Contact: Curt Schmutte]

Water Use Efficiency

The Water Use Efficiency common program is based upon the notion that before Californians pay to develop new water supplies, to serve all beneficial uses, we must use currently developed supplies efficiently.

The Bay-Delta Advisory Council established a Water Use Efficiency Work Group to provide policy guidance in the development of appropriate and reasonable conservation and reclamation initiatives to address usage by all water users: agricultural, municipal & industrial, and environmental (e.g. wildlife refuges).

The Water Use Efficiency Program relies primarily upon existing protocols developed through previous negotiations – urban best management practices (BMPs) and agricultural efficient water management practices (EWMPs) – as the program's foundation. It is expected that incentives (e.g. technical assistance, access to "new" water, and entry in the burgeoning water market structure, etc.) will largely preclude the need for a more regulatory approach while preserving high levels of local control.

[Program Contact: Rick Soehren]

Storage and Conveyance

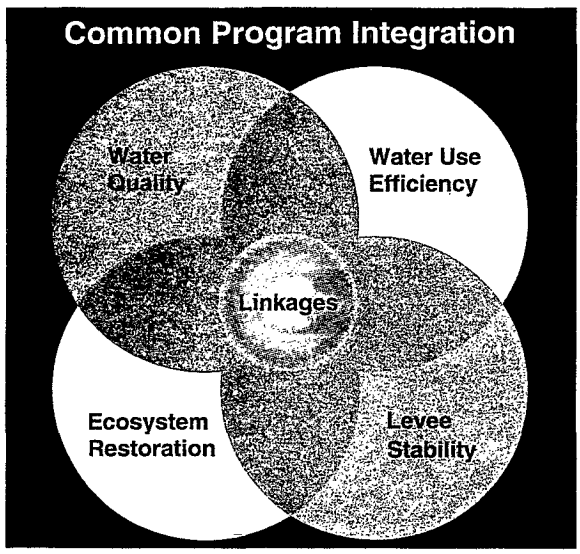
Storage and conveyance components are the key variables differentiating the 3 alternatives. Building upon a comprehensive database of potential storage and conveyance projects, including groundwater storage, a technical team is modeling various configurations. With respect to additional storage, the Program considers groundwater storage/conjunctive use and off-stream storage as the highest assessment priority and new on-stream reservoirs as the lowest, due to environmental impacts and cost factors. The key criterion is the ability to improve the operational flexibility of our water management system. The groundwater management/conjunctive use component is being pursued through outreach to local residents to determine which communities are willing and interested in participating in a conjunctive use/storage program.

[Program Contact: Stein Buer]

A programmatic EIR/S analyzes alternatives and their impacts in general terms, reflecting the broad categories of actions comprising a programmatic alternative. During Phase III of the CALFED Program, numerous project-level environmental documents will be prepared describing specific projects and the impacts of implementation as part of the comprehensive solution.

WATER QUALITY

The objective of the water quality common program is to provide good water quality for environmental, agricultural, drinking water, industrial and recreational beneficial uses.



The Program established a Water Quality Technical Group to identify the most critical parameters of concern affecting beneficial uses. Representives of interested constituencies that may be impacted by actions recommended as part of the water quality common program worked with the Group to develop a list of parameters which includes metals and toxic elements (e.g. cadmium, copper, mercury, zinc, etc.), pesticides, minerals (e.g. salts, boron, bromide), nutrients, organic carbon, temperature and turbidity.

In addition to inventorying parameters of concern, the technical group has designated specific geographic areas with problems attributable to one or more of the water quality parameters. The Group is identifying water quality targets, potential sources of problems, and recommended remediation actions to improve water quality.

Some of the recommended water quality actions address mine drainage, agricultural drainage, urban/industrial runoff, industrial discharges, and wastewater discharges throughout the Bay-Delta system. It is expected that, as with all CALFED common programs, there will be benefits associated with linkages of water quality actions to other program components such as ecosystem restoration. Such integration analyses are being pursued in all aspects of the Program.

Another important area in which the water quality common program is focusing its attention is coordination with on-going watershed management programs. Ensuring a minimum of duplication and maximum water quality improvements is the objective of such involvement.

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CALFED Agencies:

- CA Resources Agency
  - CA Dept. of Fish and Game
  - CA Dept. of Water Resources
- CA Environmental Protection Agency
  - State Water Resources Control Board
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Dept. of the Interior
  - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
  - U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Dept. of Commerce
  - National Marine Fisheries Service